THE

Great Benefits of Christ,

TO ALL

That Believe on, and Obey Him:

BEING A Isa. 40. 3.

TREATISE

ON

HEBREWS 2. 15.

Wherein it is shewed and made known, How People may be Freed and Delivered from that **Slavish Fear of Death**, whereby they are subject to Bondage throughout their Life-Time.

And also, how they may be saved and preserved from the **Evil and Danger of Death**, when it shall approach nigh, and come actually upon them.

By **Richard Stafford**, a Servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sting of Death is Sin, 1 Cor. 15. 56. *Cast away from you all your Transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new Heart, and a new Spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn your selves, and live ye*, Ezek. 18. 31. 32.

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

UPON *the Compiling of my* Book of Happiness, (*in Chap.* 11. *Page* 378, 390. *whereof it is Treated* Concerning the Fear of Death, and of the Condition of Good Men in their Death,) *There was a strange Imagination injected into my Mind, by Satan, (for by such kinds of Method and foolish Suggestions his Kingdom stands) as if to Think, Talk, or Discourse concerning* Death, *were not altogether so proper, and becoming People in their Youth, and in the midst of Life. And therefore I did vainly and falsly conclude within my self, that if in digesting and setting down the Contents thereof, I should mention, in plain Words, how that it did, in that*

Chapter, treat concerning the Fear of Death; *This I then ſuppoſed to be no welcome (which now I know is the alone uſeful) Subject, ſo as to meet Acceptance from the World; and thereupon I Sinfully and Ignorantly left it out; for which ſame Omiſſion and Neglect, (as therein are many others; for which, that aforementioned Book hath ſuffered Loſs, and been obſtructed in its Publication and Reception) I have been often very much troubled. The Tempter and Deceiver of Mankind did herein ſerve his End, as to let, hinder, reſiſt and defeat Good.*

But now upon better and more adviſed Conſideration, I do fully know, and am aſſured that this is the One Thing Needful *for Young Men and Maidens, Old Men and Children, yea for all Mankind, High and Low, Rich and Poor, to be Taught and Inſtructed aright, how they may be Safe and Happy in their laſt Exit, or going off from the Stage of this Earth; for we muſt unavoidably go off alſo, as others are gone already, as ſoon as we have acted our Part which we are now Acting. Some of the preſent Generation will go hence within a Year, ſome within Two, Three, Ten or more Years; and it may be within ſo many Days, Weeks or Months, according as to each Man his Time is appointed*

and his Days on Earth, are like that of an Hireling. It is but a Dying Life, *and here, in the following Words of Truth, it is ſhewed from out of the Scriptures, the Book of Life, (which was given to make us* Wiſe unto Salvation,) *how our* Converſation *may be ſo* ordered aright, *Pſal.* 50. 23. *That when this Life, which is as a Vapour, and continueth not, goeth out, and is ended, a Bleſſed Immortality and Eternal Life may ſucceed, and be grafted thereon.*

The enſuing Matter is ſomewhat New, and further than what either I my ſelf, or any other, in their Treatiſes *or* Sermons, *have yet Publiſhed unto the World. And may the ſame* GOD, *who* Miniſtreth Seed to the Sower, *multiply the Seed ſown; and ſo bleſs and ſucceed this, that it may* Proſper *in the Thing whereto he ſends it: For it is thereby ſown and thrown out in ſuch wiſe, that it may be received and harrowed into the Hearts of other Men and Women, in order to that future Harveſt of* Souls, *in the End of the World; (when alſo it will be ſeen and found true,* He that winneth Souls, is Wiſe) *That as in this Vale of Miſery, none is Happy before Death; ſo in this World of Wickedneſs and Iniquity, alas! too few are*

Happy therein. And therefore, hereby it may be holpen and provided, or at least made known and manifested, that more for the future, both in this, and in the Generations following, may be Happy and Blessed in their Death, by Dying in the Lord, *which none can be, unless they have also lived unto the Lord, and by* Good Works *laid in a good Foundation before hand, against this Time to come. This, I say, is a real Instance of doing the greatest and most enduring Good unto the Children of Men.*

Whosoever shall cast a transient and casual View hereon, can never meet with a more near and useful Subject to himself; for whither he shall Read, or go away without Reading, yet he must of necessity, and shall, unavoidably, experience in himself; and he shall be (whither he will, or refuse,) one Example of the Things here spoken off.

Heb. 2. 15.

And deliver them who through fear of Death were all their Life-Time ſubject to Bondage.

THough ſome think that ſuch kinds of Texts are only fit and proper for Funeral Sermons, or to be heard or read only by ſick or old People; yet it is ſaid in the Verſe immediately foregoing, *The Children are partakers of Fleſh and Blood*; that is, the Children of God, the Heirs of Life and Immortality, in this preſent State, are ſubject to Dying and Death; ſo that likewiſe every one of us ſhall take part of the ſame. And as we ſenſibly know that moſt of us, through this fear of Death, are ſubject to Bondage, as often as we ſeriouſly and throughly think of it; ſo it is a ſubject proper at all times, throughout every Age and period of Life, in all places, none being exempt from it, and before all Perſons, (they being *of One Blood*, Act. 17. 26. and Partakers of the ſame Fleſh,) to be diſcourſed and treated of.

The *Paſſover* was to be eaten with bitter and ſower Herbs, whereby was typified, not only that manifold Trouble and Sorrow which we ſhould

ſee and meet withall, as we paſs over this River of Life; but alſo, herein was ſet forth that *Bitterneſs of Death*, as *Agag* truly Phraſeth it, which is not at the cloſe and end of this Life. This *Fear* and *Bitterneſs of Death* doth partly ariſe from the thing it ſelf, and alſo from what is conſequent and follows after it, as is that ſenſible Pain and fore going Weakneſs which it brings on the Body. It makes a pale and diſtorted Countenance; and then, as it turns to Corruption, it is liable to Stink and Loathſomneſs; either the nearneſs thereof, or the through Apprehenſion concerning it, doth turn our Stomach againſt all Food and Suſtenance, and makes our Bowels to wamble. By the Firſt, Is ſhewn forth the Emblem and Signification of that future State we are entring in, where we ſhall neither Eat nor Drink, Marry, nor yet be given in Marriage; but all thoſe things ſhall be laid aſide which relate to Mortality and Imperfection, and it having ſuch an effect upon the Bowels, as here mentioned, they do hereby ſympathize before hand, what they ſhall not be ſo much ſenſible of; but it ſhall actually come upon them, for the Stink, Corruption and Deſolution doth firſt begin with them.

There is no need of uſing many Words to expreſs the exceeding terribleneſs & dreadfulneſs of Death, for we find & feel enough of it from within our ſelves. The more knowing and apprehenſive any one is, the greater Thought and ſearching of Heart he hath concerning it. To ſuch it doth as often recurr to his Mind that he ſhall Die, as he

is ſenſible that he now Lives. What ſhall become of him then, or what he ſhall undergo, he knows not; but his Heart doth for the moſt part meditate Terrour, and forebode Evil, becauſe he ſees that it is altogether Evil, and to be abhorred what doth befall the Body. Herein a ſeeming benefit and conveniency is contained under a dreadful Aſpect and Appearance, in that hereby the Body is freed from, and rendred inſenſible of that Weakneſs and Pain, under which it did before Groan and Languiſh. For ſo is the ordering of our God and Creator, that we ſhould partake of, and endure theſe and the like evil things, before we enter into Reſt, thereby making the Reſt yet more ſweet unto us.

And he ſaw that Reſt was Good, and the Land that it was Pleaſant, Gen. 49. 15. Now this thing of Reſt, is a Relative Term, which hath reſpect to ſomewhat fore-going: Even that Pain, Labour, Tireſomeneſs, Sorrow, Trouble, and all thoſe things which are uncouth, irkſome, and dreadful to our Nature, as to which, this pleaſant Land is to afford all things contrary thereunto; which are as much delightful and ſatisfactory, as the others were tedious and painful. They who had thoſe long weariſome and intricate Journeys in the Wilderneſs did ſenſibly know that Reſt was good and deſirable; for out of Hope and Expectation of that, they did ſubject themſelves unto outward Evils, Pain and Hardſhip.

This Place of *Gen.* 49. 15. doth Originally intend, How that the Sons of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*,

Jacob, (under which are typified and comprehended all the Faithful,) to whom the Land of Promiſe was; yet they ſhould undergoe much Wearineſs and Pain in the mean while, *That Reſt ſhould be found good for them, and the Land to be pleaſant*, by comparing with the contrary evil things, that before they had met withal. For *Jacob* doth here tell them what ſhould befall them in the laſt Days, which accordingly came to paſs. He ſpake by the Spirit of God, before whom all things are preſent and certain, and the things which were not as yet, he knew them as if they already were. *By Faith Abraham ſojourned in the Land of Promiſe, as in a ſtrange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the Heirs with him of the ſame Promiſe*, Heb. 11. 9. By which is ſhewn forth, that he did not know it even when he was in the *Land of Promiſe*. And then the *Patriarchs* had not fixed and dwelling Houſes, *ſuch as have Foundations*, verſ. 10. and were builded, which are unmoveable; but only *Tabernacles* or moving Tents, juſt like Shepherds, Travailers or Souldiers uſe in their Motion. And afterwards their Seed did ſojourn in a ſtrange Land, who did bring them into Bondage, and evil entreated them for four hundred Years. Again, When after that God brought them forth, he cauſed them to wander forty Years in the Wilderneſs, and led them through that great and terrible Wilderneſs, wherein were fiery Serpents and Scorpions, and Draught, where there was no Water; who brought them forth Water out of the Rock

of

of Flint. This was to humble and prove them, to do them good in their latter end, which accordingly came so to pass; for by this Way and Method he brought them, at last, into a good Land, a Land of Brooks of Water, of Fountains and Depths, that spring out of Valleys and Hills.

Now, *All these things happened to them in a Figure*, and they are a Shew and Representation to us, that as the Lord God (the Creator and Preserver of Mankind) did lead forth the Children of *Israel* through the Wilderness, into the Land of Promise; so he did before that time, and hath ever since, and doth continue to do so at this Day, to lead all the Generations of Men and Women, of every Nation, Countrey, and Language, throughout this Earth, unto that Land of Promise, or to that place where we shall be, after we are removed from hence. That is no Passage or Through-fare, (as this Earth is,) but an abiding and eternal State.

But as there is mention of a good Land, and of a great and terrible Wilderness; there are fruitful Countries, as also barren Mountains and Deserts; there is both healthful and also noisome Pestilential Air: Again, thus much is sensible and evident, That there is Good and Evil, Pain and Pleasure, Comfort and Vexation; now these opposite and contrary things happen unto us in an imperfect, interchangable, and successive manner; here so much is also manifested and perceivable to our outward Sences. As to what is further on, that there is Light and Darkness, there is somewhat

Above

Above and somewhat Below; to the Knowledg
whereof we find and feel in our selves a Desire li
ked on to our Nature to have a Being above. I d
hereby ask him that shall read this, Whither at m
making known and proposing this unto thee, tho
dost not desire that thy Spirit may be receive
into the Heavens above, after thy Body is laid
the Grave? And is there not in thee an Horrou
and a Dread of falling below into the Place un
derneath, to be thrust down into the Bottomle
Pit, the infernal and eternal Dungeon, where
utter Darkness? If it is not so with thee as I fe
and discern it in my self, then the LORD, wh
fashioneth the Hearts of the Inhabitants of th
Earth *Alike*, *Psal.* 33. 15. hath made me diffe
rent from other Men; which yet he hath not, fo
I am confident the same Mind is in thee also, an
in all People, unless in Ignorant Souls and Unbe
lievers, in those Fools and Brutish Men who thin
of none of these things

In this present State (where our Body is as
were a Garment to the Soul) Things are given an
provided for us, by our Good and Wise Creator
which are suitable & convenient to this Conditio
and Need; as what tends to Nourishment, Suste
nance, Warmth, Rest, and such like. The Bound
of our Habitation are determined on this Face o
the Earth, which also is stablished that it canno
be moved; so that against falling down we know
not where, or from being swallowed up as *Korah*
Dathan, and *Abiram*; or as the Inhabitants o
Jamaica and *Sicily* lately were, we think our selve
suffi

afficiently Safe and Secure, because though that doth sometimes, yet it doth very rarely happen; that even now we enjoy a *Salvation* (which signifies Safety or Preservation) from those kinds of Evil: Yet as to what is most feared, which we are subject and liable unto, and must taste off, in this State of Things, there is no Salvation or Preservation from That; I mean from *Diseases* and *Death* it self: All other things are the more feared as they may hasten and bring on that, which is the *King of Terrors*, and most terrible of Terribles.

As it seems dreadful to be stripped Naked and turned out of Doors into the open Air in a cold Winters Night without any Cloths, Habitation, or Shelter; so there is, by Nature, this Terribleness in Death, that to allude unto 2 *Cor.* 5. 3. *We being now Clothed*, (I mean with the Body) *shall be rendred and found Naked.* For we are assured that the Soul doth Live, when she is dislodged out of this Tabernacle; and when we think or speak after the manner of Men, we are apt to doubt that then she will not have things so proper and comfortable for her, as now the Body hath: We are also apt to imagine, that when she is let and forced out of this *Ark* of the Body, she will fly and wander up and down, and like *Noah's Dove*, she will find no Rest, nor settled Place where to inhabit or abide, but, be like thin Air, driven to and fro, and tossed.

As Man's Knowledge and Reason doth suggest these and the like things, the Revelation of God doth

doth acquaint us otherwiſe, and anſwer theſe very ſame Doubts, which by Nature ſpring up in our Minds, *And it came to paſs that the Begga dyed, and was carried by the Angels into* Abrahams *Boſom*, Luk. 16. 22. The Body is ſeen to be laid in the Grave, and turns into Corruption, ſo this cannot be ſaid as to that, which is but the Shell or Husk of the Soul. But the Soul being the Man himſelf is thus diſpoſed of, and convoyed by a Guard of Angels, to preſerve it from the Inſeſtation of Evil Spirits, (who have their Reſidence there where his Principality is, who is *Prince of the Power of the Air*) as well as to aſſiſt as to direct her in her Aſcent up above, and there to lodge the departed Soul into *Abraham's Boſom*, who is the Father of the Faithful, from whoſe Loins we are deſcended. It is there where the Souls of the Patriarchs, and the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect already are. Accordingly *Death* is called, *A Gathering to his Fathers.* As a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, where the Chickens delight and are ſatisfied to be; ſo this *Boſom of Abraham* is a Place of ſweet Repoſe. The GOD of *Abraham* will be that unto his Creatures, what a Breaſt or Boſom is to a Poor, Cold, Naked, and Hungry Infant. *For as a Young-man marrieth a Virgin, ſo ſhall his Sons Marry thee: And as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, ſo ſhall thy God rejoyce over thee*, Iſa. 62. 5. And ſo Gods Care to his People is elſewhere compared to a Nurſe dandling upon her Knees. His Spirit which ſpake by *Iſaiah*, is full

to

to this Purpose; for He who first created and then implanted that Love, Care and Compassion in Father, Mother, Nurse, and other Creatures, will now exert and shew forth all these immediately by Himself only.

The Righteous Perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart, &c. *He shall enter into Peace, they shall rest in their Beds*, &c. Isa. 57. 1, 2. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of Refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*, Act. 3. 19. We being here expressly told of *Abrahams Bosom*, of *entring into Peace*, and *resting on their Beds*, and of the *Times of Refreshing*. All these do directly answer and satisfy those Fears and Surmises of being *found Naked*, and destitute of all things; that the Soul will be full of Trouble and Restlesness, or be exposed to Cold or Irksomeness.

Not that I believe it will be exactly so in all the Particulars and Circumstances, as is here expressed; but it will be alike, and have some resemblance to what is signified hereby. *Have the Gates of Death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the Doors of the Shaddow of Death?* Job. 38. 17. That thou mayest see and know how and what is within, after that People are entered there. Of all the things which God hath kept secret and hidden from the Children of Men, nothing is more secret and hidden than our future State and Condition. Of which future State and Condition, wise and considering Men have enquired and searched diligently, searching what or what manner

manner of Creatures themſelves ſhould be, after their Body returns to its Earth; and it is yet unknown to them: For even when we do not ſo much as ſee and know what is done in the next Neighbouring-Houſe, unleſs our ſelves be there, or it be told unto us; how much leſs can we know what is tranſacted in Heaven above, or what is the Decree of GOD concerning us, no more than we can now ſee into the lowermoſt parts of the Earth. But the Word which was with God, and the Word was God, which is in the Boſom of the Father, who came down from Heaven, he hath declared in ſome manner how it ſhall be. *Marvel not at this: for the Hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, And they that have done good, ſhall ariſe unto the Reſurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation*, Joh. 5. 28, 29. *The Spirit of Chriſt which was in the Prophets*, 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11. Mark here how it is called *The Spirit of Chriſt*, which did actuate them all; and in the Apoſtles, and in the Hearts of all the Faithful, at this Day, do alſo ſignifie and teſtifie before Hand the ſame, that *All* muſt die, and come to Judgment, and afterwards ſhall be either eternally Saved, or Damned. We may feel within every one of us, our own Spirits witneſſing together, and aſſenting, that even ſo it will be. And ſo we know thus much before hand, in general Terms, that it will be either Good or Evil with us; that we ſhall partake of Happineſs, or Miſery. This will be

an infinitely more abiding and enduring State, than this Life, which is as a Vapour, and continueth not; so that it is evident, there are two kinds of *Futurity*, *Good* and *Evil*, *Happiness* and *Misery*, *Pleasure* and *Pain*, *Salvation* and *Damnation*, *Heaven* and *Hell*.

As it is written, *This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into Heaven*, Acts 1. 11. Now *Jesus Christ* is the Word of God, and as all things were created by the same Word, they are now upheld by the same Word; the same Word doth acquaint us with the several Natures of them, and how they pertain to us Men: So the same Word doth assure us beforehand, how it will be in the World to come, whereof we speak, and which we are all just entring into. There is a future State of *Reward* or *Punishment*, *Blessing* or *Cursing*, *Life* or *Death*, *Happiness* or *Misery*; and through the Apprehension of this last and worst Thing, there doth arise that Bondage through *Fear of Death*; which is the Gate and Entrance into this future and Invisible World.

But how, and after what manner *Jesus Christ*, *which delivered us from the Wrath to come*, 1 Thes. 1. 10. doth here in the Words of the Text *Deliver them who through fear of Death were all their Life-time subject to Bondage*. This will be worth our present Enquiry, as also the narrow and attentive Consideration of the Reader.

It is good to trace things up to their Original, to learn the Causes and true Nature of them, whereby a right Remedy and Cure may be applied to the Evil and to the Disease. We read in *Gen.* 3. That Death came into the World as the Effect and Punishment of Sin and Transgression, and also thereupon the Ground was accursed; a Vanity and Insufficiency was put into things, *In Sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the Days of thy Life.* From whence is further entailed and linked on all that manifold Trouble and Vexation of Spirit we meet with on this Earth; as also from hence doth arise that *certain fearful Looking for* of yet worse things to come after our Spirits, that is, our selves are dislodged from this Body, which we are Day by Day in our several Persons.

Behold herein the Goodness and Severity of God, In that all Mankind (both Saint and Sinner, none excepted) are afflicted and punished after this manner; they must go through much Sorrow here, and after tast of this bitter and dreadful thing of Death, herein is Severity. But towards his faithful People and Children *Goodness*, if they continue in his Goodness; otherwise they shall be cut off from that most precious Promise and Priviledge God hath yet made and reserved for Mankind, *It shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel*, Gen. 3. 15. Here is the Promise, which since that time it was first Spoken, hath been accordingly made good, *For since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead. For as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall*

all be made Alive, 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22. Here are the inexpressible Priviledges and Benefits that our Gracious God hath again enfranchized poor Mankind with, after he had by his Misdemeanour, in doing forbidden Things, lost and forfeited them.

I have been often astonished within my self to behold that exact Connection and Agreement, which is between the several Parts of Scripture together, though the Places are very distant and far asunder; which do abundantly confirm unto us the Wisdom of God and the Truth of his Revealed Word, which is the Book of the Lord: For whereas it was said in the Beginning, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpents Head*, which is his vital Part, (it having been reported that the only and soonest Way to kill that venemous and destructive Beast is to strike at his Head) We understand from the Words immediately foregoing my Text, that Christ hath already done the foregoing necessary thing, *That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil.* which was bruising his Head to that Degree, so that it shall never be whole and sound again. Now the Works of God are Gradual, Orderly, and Successive, for he hath been, and is still doing this Work, but it is not yet throughly finished and perfected, which at length will be.

If it be asked, How or after what manner *Jesus Christ* doth this? We learn and plainly understand this from his Name which was given unto him in the Womb, *And thou shalt call his name*

JESUS, for he shall save his People from their Sins, Mat. 1. 21. The Word *Jesus* or *Joshuah* signifies a Saviour or Deliverer; *As it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away Ungodliness from Jacob*, Rom. 11. 26. Now put all this together, and this natural and necessary Inference doth arise, *That the Way whereby Jesus Christ doth deliver them who through Fear of Death are all their Life time subject to Bondage, is, By Saving them from their Sins, and by turning them from their Ungodliness*; for saith the same Spirit of Truth, *The Sting of Death is Sin*, 1 Cor. 15. 56. But when that Sting is plucked out, as so it is where *Jesus Christ* is formed into any of us, there the foregoing Question may be used, *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory?* ver. 55. By which word *Victory* is signified that overcoming Nature, whereby it doth thrust down and consign over unto the second *Death*: For only by reason of Sin, Transgression, and Ungodliness it comes to pass that we are subject to Bondage, through a slavish kind of Fear of what God, who hath denounced and revealed a Punishment against these things, will doe unto us for the same, when we come to meet with him beyond the Grave.

This we sensibly know and experimentally feel, that after we have committed Sin, like our Forefather *Adam*, *We are afraid*, Gen. 3. 10. and as our Consciences are obnoxious to Guilt, there doth arise in them a fearful Expectation of Evil Things to come; which being sensible and perceivable

ceivable to us, as *Adam* did hide himself, so the generality of Men and Women use no other Remedy and Preservative herein, but not to think of it, or to drive it out of their Minds on set purpose, *By putting the Evil Day far from them*; which it is impossible to doe, but only the Sence and Thoughts thereof: Whereas the good and right way is, *If thou hast sinned, do so no more*; *but ask Pardon for thy former Sins*; *Repent of what is past, and be Watchful for the Future*. But the other is as foolish a Device, as for a Capital Felon, or any other who hath done Things worthy of Death, only to drive away the Thoughts of it, and not to prepare for his Tryal or Defence; or afterwards not to seek out and endeavour after a Reprieve or Pardon: So again it is on the other hand, when we keep Innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is Right, this doth afford Peace all the mean while, and at last also: Which exempts and frees from all Trouble and Vexation of Spirit; as also it takes away that Doubt of Mind as to the further Event and last consequent of things. We do experimentally find that *as we serve God in Righteousness and Holiness all the days of our Life, we are without Fear*, Luk. 1. 74, 75. for almost all Fear doth arise from Sin or Evil, so that consequentially the more we are freed from them, the more we are freed from the other also: And so whereas it is here before said, *That we being delivered from the Hands of our Enemies might serve him without Fear*. the Enemies here spoken of are *Sin*, *Satan*, and *Death*. The Devil

could doe no Harm to any one unless he found in some Sin or Evil in the Party, wherein to ground his Temptation and inflict his Punishment. Said the Lamb of God, in whom was no Sin, *The Prince of this World cometh and findeth nothing in me*; so that his Temptation could not have the designed Effect on him. When he endured that bitter Passion, and was under the Wrath of God; *He was wounded for our Transgressions, He was bruised for our Iniquities: And the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. And He bare the Sin of many*, Isa. 53. 5, 6, 12. But if it had not been for that it is not possible for him to have undergone any Pain or Suffering. As afterwards, because he was the *Holy one he did not see Corruption*, Psal. 16. 10. and *It was not possible that he should be holden of Death*, as the inspired Apostle doth truly averr it; so that it is evident, neither the Devil himself, nor Death could hurt any one unless it was for Sin, whereupon Sin doth become the greatest, and, I may say, the only Enemy for though the Word *Enemy* is often applied, and most commonly understood of our Fellow-creatures, (they being the next immediate visible Hand which doth the real or supposed Evil or Harm yet here again, it is not so much the particular Man or Woman that is our Enemy, but the Sin which doth appear forth through them doth annoy and afflict us: Yet here again as the Grace and Doctrine of *Christ* would heal and rectifie those corrupt and mistaken Principles in them wherein he doth save and deliver them from those

kinds

ound kinds of Enemies also: And it being likewise said, ound *That He doth save us from the Hand of all that* Said *hate us*, Herein he doth shew and manifest him- *The*self to be a most perfect and compleat Saviour *ng in* and Deliverer. This also must extend to Satan e the and his Legions of Evil Spirits, for we are told, tha and do find it so, that *He hath great Wrath a-* God *gainst us, because he hath but a short time.* which *wa* Wrath he doth shew forth and exert against us, *lai* as he acts through such incarnate and visible In- *e Si* struments, who are of the like Flesh and Blood been with our selves.

der- As afore-intimated, All other evil things are be the more feared, according as they may the more *upti* occasion, hasten, or bring on *Death* it self, which *t he* is the last Enemy that shall be destroyed. But oftl even, after that hath destroyed our Body, Christ ithe will destroy that. Now to destroy the Destroyer, on that is Salvation, indeed. Which again will be ome effected, after it hath seized and done its worst my and utmost upon us. *I will ransom them from the* and *Power of the Grave.* (whereby it may be under- rea stood, that the Prince of Life will, as it were, land force and command it so, for he is greater in Power rm and Might) *I will redeem them from Death.* (As ula the first brought us into Life, and made us liable e Sin and subject unto Dying and Death; so he will an rescue and bring us up from it. Whereto agree rac the Words of the Psalmist, *He that is our God,* tifi *is the God of Salvation; and unto God the* LORD em *belong the Issues from Death,* Psal. 68. 20.) *O* hos *Death I will be thy Plagues, O Grave I will be thy* inds

Deſtruction. Death hath been heretofore a Plague to us, and the Grave hath deſtroyed and crumbled our Body into Duſt, when before it was ſafe and intire Fleſh and Blood. But God and Chriſt will (in this Sence) *Repent Himſelf, for his Servants ſake*, and he will plague this Plague, and deſtroy this Deſtroyer; ſo that it ſhall be returned upon him, and ſaid, *O thou Enemy, Deſtructions are come to a perpetual end*, Pſal. 9. 6. That is, When the very ſame Things, which did before ſeem to be deſtroyed, and come to nothing, are raiſed up to Life and Being again, never more to turn into Corruption, nor yet to be ſubject unto Deſtruction. All this ſtands ratified and confirmed with this kind of Speech, *Repentance ſhall be hid from mine Eyes*, Hoſ. 13. 14. Which is as much as if GOD ſhould ſay, I will never repent nor alter from this my Decree and Purpoſe.

It was before obſerved, That the Works of God are Gradual, Orderly, and Succeſſive, and that Chriſt is now doing his Work; but it is not yet done and finiſhed.

But at the end he ſhall have deliver'd up the Kingdome to the Father: For he muſt reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet, which is not done yet. *But now we ſee not yet all things put under Him*; for the Devil, and Wicked Men, and Death do ſtill reign in the World, For the laſt Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, is Death; and then it will be fulfilled and conſummated, *That through Death, he might actually deſtroy him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil.* This will be found

lague- und true at the time of the End, at the con-
nbled- fuſion and ſhutting up of all Things.
e and But whereas it is further added, *And deliver*
t will- *them who through fear of Death were all their*
ants Life-Time ſubject to Bondage; hence is ſome
this good, yea, and a very great Good to be expect-
him, d, and alſo had in this preſent Time, and mean
e to while. By being *ſubject to Bondage*, is denoted
e ve- that Slavery which the Mind is ſubject unto,
e de- through this *Fear of Death*, which Fear hath tor-
up ment, and is ſenſible: It running throughout all
into our Life, ſo that it doth embitter the Comforts
ſtru- thereof. The Knowledge and Wiſdom of the
with ancient Heathens, (whoſe Care and Concern
from herein will riſe up in Judgment againſt many Peo-
as ple of this Generation, and what is called a Chri-
alte- ſtian Countrey) could diſcern this much, How
that it was neceſſary, to the Happineſs of this
s of Life, to be ſafe and free from the *Fear of Death*,
and before it came; and alſo to be preſerved from
s not the Danger thereof, when it ſhall be actually
preſent: Which they did endeavour to fence
King themſelves againſt, by doing good Works and
hath Offices, *Speaking the Truth*, and by the Practice
done of Moral Vertue. But for want of the Grace and
nder Truth, which came by Jeſus Chriſt, they could
eath build on no ſure Foundation, nor yet attain unto
emy any certain Preſervation or *Salvation*, as concern-
will ing this laſt and dreadful Thing. As to which,
ough the Faith and Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,
d the and the Obſervance of whatſoever he hath com-
ll be manded, doth both.
ound

Now

Now Christ doth deliver Mankind from this *Bondage*, that is, from the *Slavish Fear* thereof, at present, and from that Punishment and Confinement which this *Death* consigns People over unto, no other way, than by *Saving them from their Sins*, and not in their Sins. For this would be impossible, and a contradiction in Terms. But to that agree the other Scriptures, *Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus Christ, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his Iniquities*, Act. 3. 26. So that none will have the Blessing of Christ, but only he that is *turned from his Iniquities*. And until this be done, not one Jot or Tittle of God's precious Promises, or comfortable Truth, doth belong to him. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8. Hence it appears that Christ will neither be a Saviour to thee nor me, unless these Works of the Devil are effectually destroyed in thee and me.

If thou askest, What are the Works of the Devil? the answer is to be gathered from the same Verse, *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil. So that all Sin or Unrighteousness, is the Work of the Devil* All those Works of the Flesh, recited up in Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strifes, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like*, are the Works of the Devil. And if we do not find all these actually destroyed within us, the Son of God is no Saviour

to

to us; we are not saved from our Sins, but we are yet in our Sins; We are not delivered from that Corruption, and guilt of our Nature, nor yet are we utterly freed from being Servants of Sin: The Scripture is all along, in a wonderful manner, consonant and agreeable to its self in this Thing. *And ye know that he* (viz. Christ) *was manifested to take away our Sins, and in him was no Sin. Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him,* 1 John 3. 5, 6. *Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works,* Tit. 2. 14.

All these Scriptures are significant and pertinent to the matter in hand, and there are more than an Hundred others, which do all confirm and manifest the intended Point, that Christ will no other ways save us from that *Fear of Death,* and and that Bondage occasioned by it throughout our Life-time, as also, from all those Evils which follow afterwards, but by first, *Saving us from our Sins.* All Preaching and Publishing is in Vain, and all Reading or Hearing is in Vain, unless the Doctrines are made good, and the Word is confirmed out of this Pillar and Ground of Truth.

I have often thought of, and wondred at, the Hypocrisie of those as I have seen therein, the cunning Delusion of Satan, who, like them we read of in *Isaiah,* that did *Call themselves of the Holy*

Holy City, and *ſtay upon the God of Iſrael*; or like thoſe in *Micah* 3. 11. who, when they do ſeveral things contrary unto, and different from his Law, *yet they will lean upon the Lord, and ſay, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.* So among us there be thoſe who profeſs and talk very much of GOD and of CHRIST, who ſpend much Time in his Worſhip and outward Service, and are conſtant and diligent therein; who make a fair Shew in the Fleſh, and external Obſervances, and ſeem to be more Religious than ordinary; and yet they do not live the Life of God nor of Chriſt. What doth all this profit and ſignifie? truly and in good earneſt it is not a Religion, that is, *to the Saving of the Soul*; for there is a Religion which is grounded upon the Cuſtom of the World, or juſt to pacifie natural Conſcience, or to build up ſome vain and falſe Hopes for Heaven; and there is another pure, and undefiled, ſincere and univerſal Religion, which is indeed to the ſaving of the Soul. But if People talk never ſo much of God and of Chriſt, and ſeem to ſerve him never ſo much, but all the while themſelves are not like unto God and to Chriſt, they are not transformed into the Image of Him who created them, nor are they partakers of the Divine Nature, theſe have the Name of Chriſtians, but they have not the Thing. For all their Appearance unto others, and deceiving of themſelves, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. Unto whom ſuch do not belong. *If any Man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*, Rom.

Rom. 8. 9. Now the Fruit of the Spirit is *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*, and all such Dispositions of Soul and outward Actions; as against such there is no Law, either in the Old or New Testament. *And they that are Christs, have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts*, Gal. 5. 24. In the Margent it is *Passions*. So that the meaning is, that it is not sufficient only to abstain from Gluttony, Drunkenness, filthy Lusts; but even those Passions of Anger, Wrath, Malice, Envy, and such like, are to be crucified and put to Death, if they are indeed Members of a Crucified Saviour. But now, as it is Written, *The Lord hath mingled a perverse Spirit in the midst of Egypt*, so there is evidently to be seen a *Perverse Spirit* amongst many who are called Religious, and themselves would fain be accounted so. There is the Spirit of Stubbornness, and the Spirit of Reproach, and the Spirit of Falshood, Lying, Defamation, bearing false Witness, intermingled amongst them, and they are found to be *desirous of vain Glory, provoking one another, envying one another*. Certain it is that they do not *live in the Spirit*, nor yet *walk in the Spirit*; but they are in those things contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and so they are *Antichrists* also. For not only *He that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh*, 1 John 4. 3. Not only the *Pope*, whose Traditions, Impositions, and Commandments, are contrary to those of Christ; but whatever besides is contrary to the Doctrine of Christ, that is *Antichrist*

tichriſt alſo; for ſo the Greek Word for *Antichriſt* ſuc
ſignifies. *And this is that Spirit of Antichriſt* no
whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and eve co
now already is it in the World. Ibidem. Like thoſ Do
who call Him Lord, Lord, and would not do th re
Things he ſaith; ſo let either Preachers or Hea Co
rers uſe never ſo many complemental and fin Ve
Expreſſions concerning Him, that he is altogethe Go
Lovely, and the chiefeſt of Ten Thouſand; (He i E
ſo indeed, and infinitely more Good and Gracio he
unto Mankind, than the Tongue of Men and An ea
gels can ſet forth and expreſs.) But if themſelves A
in the mean while, do deſpiſe, and ſhew them ho
ſelves ſtubborn againſt the Word of God, and th er
Miniſtration thereof, and they go on frowardly nd
in the way of their Heart, their own Actions here ne
in run counter to their Words; and hereby the re
ſhew themſelves thus to Chriſt, the Word of God ey
whom before they did ſeem to Honour, and ſpea ri
Good of his Name. Again, where People do pic nt
and chooſe, and they are for keeping ſome of th o in
Commandments of God, and neglecting others in,
whereas the very laſt Command and Directio you
which Chriſt is recorded to have given, which ney
Comprehenſive, and of greateſt Concern of a en
the reſt, is, That his Diſciples ſhould *Teach Peop* rea
to obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded etw
Mat. 28. 20. He doth poſitively averr and affirm ho
Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Command nce
ments, and ſhall teach Men ſo, he ſhall be called th he
leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 19. Tha ve
is, in the Diſpenſation and Miniſtry of the Goſpe or,
ſuc

such an one is the very worſt of them, and indeed, not fit to be a Miniſter thereof. And yet, How common is it in our Days, to intimate in their Doctrine, that ſuch and ſuch things, though they are a Breach of ſome of the greater and leſſer Commandments, yet they are allowable to the Weakneſs of Fleſh and Blood, and conſiſtent with Goſpel Liberty, or the *Spot of God's Children.*

But they have not ſo learned of Chriſt, to give the leaſt way towards the Breach of one of the leaſt of his Commandments.

Again, where People do ſtand upon the Threshold and go no further, that is after the manner of Fooliſh Worldly Worſhippers, they Sin and Confeſs, they Confeſs and Sin, and in the mean while they *ſerve divers Luſts and Pleaſures*; or they do not forſake, get out from and beyond this Sin; or they always ſtick in the *principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*; and not go on into Perfection; herein they do not endeavour to imitate and follow after him who was without Sin, nor do they preſs after his Holineſs if they would be a partaker of his Happineſs; nor are they perfect, *even as their Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* All Error doth uſually lie in extreams, and commonly the very Truth doth lie between them both: For whereas many of them who ſay that they live without Sin, may be convinced out of the Law as Tranſgreſſors; ſo on the other hand, they who ſay it is not poſſible to live without Sin, it is certain that ſuch may ſin not, and abſtain from all Appearance of Evil,

much

much more than they now do: I will be bold to
ſay between them both, that it is not impoſſible
to the Grace of God, nor through Chriſt that
ſtrengtheneth him, if the Man would watch and
be heedful, and at all times work together with
that Grace; for when it is exerted forth and
uſed accordingly it is always found true, *greater*
er is He that is in you, than he that is in the World
Not to attain unto abſolute Perfection is the
Weakneſs and Infirmity of the Fleſh, but not to
labour and endeavour after it is the Fault and
Failure of the Spirit. The leſs we Sin, and the
more we abound in well doing, the more we
pleaſe God, and the more we are accepted of
him; as alſo hereby we become in our Life time
through Fear of Death leſs Subject to Bondage
Both are conſequent and dependant one upon the
other, for as the Fear of Death doth thence ariſe
becauſe by Death we muſt come and appear be-
fore God, we fear leaſt we ſhould fall under his
Anger and Puniſhment; ſo on the other Hand
the Foreknowledge and Aſſurance of his Favour
and Acceptance doth take away that Fear and
Dread.

In the things which we do in Order to God
or pertaining to Religion, It is a Sign that it
a neceſſary and ſubſtantial part thereof if the ſame
will yield Solid Comfort in a dying Day. The
thing of ſtoring up to himſelf Comfort against
his dying Day (though it is not viſible, yet it
ſenſible) is better than for a Man to *build greater*
Barns where to beſtow his Fruits and his Goods
Lu

d to Luk. 12. 18. or to have good Mows of Hay, or
ible Stacks of Corn, for nothing of this will be seen
hat or had seven Years hence: But true and solid
and Comfort in a dying Day reaches and extends it
with self further, throughout the Length of all Eterni-
and ty; for when one can *rest in his Bed*, having *wal-*
ked throughout his foregoing Life *in his Uprights-*
ness; when one can lay down his dying Head up-
thon a Bolster or Pillow in perfect Peace, (*Thou*
ot to *wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed*
and *on thee, because he trusteth in thee*, Isa. 26. 3. In
the the Margent there, it is *Peace, Peace*, doubly and
we twice, for the greater Confirmation and Security
ed of thereof) it is whole, sound, and true throughout,
time and as it stands towards God, which is in Oppo-
lage tion and Contradistinction to that false and rotten
n the Peace of ignorant Persons and Hypocrites; all
arise this is a Scripture Evidence and Assurance, that
r be such a *Perfect Peace* will be finished and consum-
er hi mated in Eternal Salvation and Glory. *Agag*
Han could say, *The Bitterness of Death is past*, but in
vou my Apprehension, the Bitterness of Death is to
an come. And as we know it is a common thing to
mingle Wine or sweet Cordials with bitter Potions,
God when our Saviour Jesus Christ tasted *Death* for
it every Man, he had a Cup of Wine mingled with
sam Gall,) so the like Discretion should be used, and
Th Care taken to get something to qualify this *Bit-*
gain *ter Cup of Death*, to have somewhat which is a real
it Fence and Preservative against this King of Ter-
reat ours: As, Blessed be God, there is some sensi-
God ble Experience of this, by *doing and working of*
Lu *Righteousness*, Psal. 15. 2. Isa. 58. 2. By Acts

of Mercy and Compaſſion and by other good
Works and Deeds; for there is as much (I will
add yet more) ſtay and ſupport againſt this evil
Day, in having done and abounded in theſe things,
than even in the Obſervance of the outward Ordi-
nances of Worſhip, Prayer, Hearing the Word
and ſuch like. As when they both ſtand in Com-
petition, the Love of God, and doing all poſſible
good to ones Neighbour, are preferred in Scrip-
ture before *all Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings*, that
making many Prayers, or all the Devotion in this
World. Nevertheleſs what God hath joyned to-
gether, (and they may be uſed ſucceſſively one
after another) None that fears God, who ſerves
Him, and will be accepted with Him, will ever
put aſunder.

*Herein is our Love made perfect, that we may
have boldneſs in the Day of Judgment: becauſe as
he is, ſo are we in this World*, 1 John 4. 17. When
the Life of Jeſus is manifeſted in all things in our
Mortal Body, then we are as ſure as we can well
be on this ſide of Heaven. We muſt needs have
ſtrong Conſolation, and be delivered from that
Bondage which is occaſioned through Fear of
Death, when we ſee our ſelves already acquitted
out of that Word, whereby we ſhall be judged at
the laſt Day. When we find the Scriptures ſtill
filled in our Perſons in good Part, and not for Evil.
When thoſe *Good Words* and *Comfortable Words*
which the Angel ſpake in *Zech.* 1. 13. do indeed
and in truth belong unto us, then we muſt needs
rejoyce in Hope, and have the moſt perfect
Aſſurance.

Three

good. That we may not be deceived, nor build up
I wi false Confidences, let us come to inſtance in ſome
is ev particular Inductions, and Concluſions. *Verily*
hing *I ſay unto you, If a Man keep my Sayings, he ſhall*
Ord *never ſee Death*, John 8. 51, 52, Upon my men-
Wor tioning, and your Reading or Hearing of this, can
Com thy Conſcience, O Man or Woman, immediately
oſſib anſwer herein, that thou doſt keep the *Sayings* of
Scri pur Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt? why then I aſ-
s, th ure thee, as ſure as God is, (which is as certain
in th as that there is a World, and any Thing in it, and
ed t more ſure than that thy Soul now liveth, for he was
ly o efore, and made it to live,) as ſure as his Word
ſerv s true, *though Abraham is dead, and the Prophets*
ll ev *re dead*, and thou ſhalt die nevertheleſs; yet
herein is that ſaying true, and ſhall be made good
ye m into thee, *Thou ſhalt never ſee Death Eternal.*
auſe He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear what the
Wh *Spirit ſaith unto the Churches, He that overcometh,*
in o *ſhall not be hurt by the ſecond Death*, Rev. 2. 11.
n we doſt thou find upon my bringing this to your Re-
is ha membrance, that thou haſt overcome the Cor-
n th uption that is within thine own Nature, and that
ear alſo which is in the World through Luſt, which
uitt alſo is branched forth into *the Luſt of the Eyes,*
ged *the Luſt of the Fleſh, and the Pride of Life?* And
res ſt haſt thou overcome the Temptations and Aſſaults
r Evi the Devil? Or if this great and good Work be
Wo not yet ſo perfect and finiſhed in thee, as thou
inde wouldſt have it, yet if thou ſhalt get it done in
t nee his Life, and before thou dieſt, then thou haſt
perfe the Word of God for it, That *thou ſhalt never be*
urt by the ſecond Death, nor by any other of the
Threadful Evils of the Inviſible World. *And*

And I gave them my Statutes, and shewed them my Judgments, which if a Man do, he shall even live in them, Ezek. 20. 11. *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*, Matth. 14. 17. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gate, into the City*, Rev. 22. 14. Here this Word is established by the Mouth of Three Witnesses, (which are sufficient) that upon the doing and keeping the Commandments of God, when this Life, which is as a Vapour, and continueth not, goeth out and is ended, Eternal Life shall succeed and be grafted thereon. When *our Life is taken off from the Earth*, Act. 8. 33. (observe the Reading thereof) it will be continued elsewhere. And though eternal Life is the *Gift of God*, yet his Spirit saith in this place of the Revelations, That *those which do his Commandments, have a Right to eat of the Tree of Life, and to enter in at the Holy City*; whereby is imported and shewn forth, that God is as it were bound and become a Debtor to Mankind, by his Covenant and Promise; so that if they do indeed perform the Conditions of the Covenant, then as *Paul* saith elsewhere upon another Occasion; so here we may *use great boldness of Speech*, as to say, *That such have a Right unto Heaven, only through the Covenant and Promise of our Gracious God*, that is they shall have the utmost certainty thereof.

It is not a few sudden transient Acts of Goodness, that is, to be Good or Godly for a spurt, as we use the Phrase in a common Proverbial Speaking, nor the Practising of a fit of Holiness for a Season

Seaſon, as when now and then the People are in a ſerious Mood, or the like, all this will not bring them to Heaven: But God who cannot lie, hath promiſed *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life*, Rom. 2. 7. That is, ſuch who will ſtill perſevere in it, notwithſtanding all the Difficulties and Oppoſitions they meet therein, which indeed will exerciſe their Patience and Labour, but not turn aſide, nor yet make them leave off going on in the good Way. Who is he that hath the Teſtimony of his Conſcience, that he doth, throughout all his Life-time, *Patiently continue in well-doing?* That he doth according to the beſt that ever he can, in Pleaſing and finding Acceptance with God. That as *Jacob ſerved Laban with all his Power*, Gen. 31. 6. we do not owe this Service to any Mortal Man whatſoever. But doſt thou Love and Serve the Lord thy God *with all thy Power, with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul?* Well, go thy Way, eat thy Bread with a chearful Heart, for God accepts thy Works; get thee joyful to the Place of thine Habitation, for thou haſt a Building and Manſion prepared for thee in the Heavens: do not then fear Diſeaſes, nor yet Death it ſelf; for that ſhall only bring thee to Immortality, and Glory, and Eternal Life. If it is not ſo, O Man, do thou ſtand up againſt me in the other World, and accuſe me as one of thoſe *Falſe Witneſſes of God*, (which *Paul* ſpeaks of, 1 *Cor.* 15. 15. *We ſhould be found if there was no Reſurrection,*) who do now from his Word and

Spirit teſtifie and aſſure thee before hand of theſe things.

And though the Ungodly and Wicked ſhall riſe up alſo and come forth into Being again, yet that is Life according to the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, as alſo according to the earneſt Deſire of the Creatures, not only to have a Being, but a well-Being, to be in Happineſs, & not in Miſery; for otherwiſe it would be good for ſuch never to have been born: Which Wiſh and Deſire will be vain and impoſſible, as it will be indeed Tormenting. *The Lord hath made all things for Himſelf; yea even the Wicked for the Day of Evil.*

The things pertaining to his Kingdom do ſtand on this wiſe. On this Earth, and in this Life God doth *hide himſelf*, Iſa. 45. 15. and he is inviſible; but there will be no ſuch thing, as Unbelief or Ignorance of God in our future State. *We ſhall know him as he is known*, and as ſenſibly as we now know one another, either for Good or Evil; to receive from him according as we have behaved our ſelves in this State of Probation and Trial. *Knowing that whilſt we are at Home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 6. which doth import that when we are deceaſed or departed from this Body, we are preſent and more near unto him; Not that God is far from us now, for the Scripture ſpeaketh expreſsly, *He is not far from every one of us*, Acts 17. 27. He filleth Heaven and Earth, and all things and all Places with his Preſence; yea, *If I go down to Hell thou art there*, by thy Preſence and Vindictive Juſtice: But thus it may be conceived of and underſtood

derſtood, A Blind-man is not far from the Light, though the Light be far from him; now this Shell or Husk of the Body is as Scales, Shutters, or Blindneſs to the Eyes, which hinders our Souls and Spirits from ſeeing God.

It is obſervable what *Balaam* ſpeaks and expreſſes of himſelf, *Which ſaw the Viſion of the Almighty, falling into a Trance, but having his Eyes open: I ſhall ſee him, but not now: I ſhall behold him, but not nigh*, &c. Numb. 24. 16. 17. When a Man falls into a Trance he is as it were Dead and out of the Body for the time, and then it was that in an imperfect Manner he ſaw the Viſion of the Almighty; but ſtill there was ſome little Sence, Tincture, and Clog of the Body, for he was in it all the while, though for the time abſtracted from the matter; and thereupon he concludes, that he ſhall behold him, but not nigh; that is, not altogether ſo nigh as long as this outward Fleſh and Blood doth interpoſe and intercept the Sight thereof. Alſo *Job* had ſome Knowledge and Underſtanding of this ſame Truth, according as it is here manifeſted and aſſerted, for he ſaith after this wiſe, *After* [obſerve that Particle] *my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh I ſhall ſee God: Whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and my Eyes ſhall behold and not another*, Job 19. 26. 27. If it be asked, How can theſe things be? or, How may we conceive it? The Apoſtle *Paul* doth clear it to our Hand, *It is ſown in Corruption, it is raiſed in Incorruption: It is ſown a natural Body, it is raiſed a Spiritual Body. There is a natural Body and there is a Spiritual Bo-*

dy. Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. But we shall all be changed, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 44, 50, 51. so that though this very same Flesh and Blood turns to Corruption, and according to the State it is now in, it can no more see God than a Stock or Stone can, yet when it shall be changed and rendred a Spiritual Body, it shall be all over and throughout as the cleerest Glass or Chrystal; and even *though Worms destroy this Body, yet in our Flesh we shall see God*; for then the Flesh will be rendred as capable to see him, as the separated Soul now is, or as the Eye doth see Light.

And he shewed me the Holy Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God, Having the Glory of God, and her Light was like unto a Stone most precious, even like a Jasper Stone, clear as Chrystal: And the City was like unto pure Gold, like unto clear Glass, Rev. 21. 10, 11, 18. from whence another Truth doth open and begin to appear, *viz.* The whole Material Creation of God, as the Earth, and such like, which is now so Grosse and Dark, will be also rendred Clear, Diaphanous, and Transparent. Spiritual Things are much more Glorious and Excellent than what are now made up of Body and Matter; and accordingly God will so transform the new Heavens and the new Earth which he shall create; or probably, the Distinction between Spirit and Matter may be then laid aside, and it shall be rendred all as one, for as the Matter is now, it is dead, dark, dull, and heavy; but the Spirit is Life, Light, Motion, and Activity; all which are much better than their

other

other oppoſite Things. The future State of things will in a more eſpecial and in a more enduring manner be Clothed and Inveſted with theſe four Qualities. *Aſpice futuro lætentur ut omnia Seclo.* Accordingly there is an *Expectation* (ſee *Rom.* 8, 19. 23.) and *Rejoycing* of the Creature after it; which is the very Reaſon of that Deſire of time paſſing away, that we may haſt and come nearer to this better State of things.

Now of the Things which we have ſpoken this is the Sum, and they are to this effect, *That there is no other way under Heaven ſhewed unto Men, whereby* Jeſus Chriſt *ſhall deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their Life time ſubject to Bondage but by Saving them from their Sins; by giving his Grace and Holy Spirit whereby they may fulfil all Righteouſneſs, and obſerve all things whatſoever He hath commanded:* This is to be their manner of Converſation, not only for a few Days, Weeks, Months, or Years, but throughout all their Life time, to comply with the End of their Redemption, which is, *to ſerve God in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs all the Days of their Life.* And though that is impoſſible with ſome, who have hitherto gone Aſtray and been Ungodly, (for what is paſt is Irrecoverable and Unavoidable) yet they may do it from this Day forward, for all the few and evil remaining Days of their Pilgrimage unto the Day of their ſeveral Reſpective Deaths. *At that Day ſhall a Man look to his Maker, and his Eyes ſhall have Reſpect to the Holy One of Iſrael,* Iſa. 17. 7. whom even now we may ſee with the Eyes of our Underſtanding being enlightened,

and

and with our very Souls, as we now behold his Creatures with our Bodily and outward Eyes. We may with much Reverence and Fear ſpeak out, and Pray, *O LORD GOD, Behold thy Creatures*; and as one Day in a more univerſal Manner, and in a much greater Congregation it ſhall be ſaid to the Cities of *Judah, Behold your GOD:* So it is hereby applied unto all that ſhall ever Read or Hear theſe Lines, Young-men and Maidens, Old-Men and Children, BEHOLD YOUR GOD. That the *Lord God Almighty* may from this Hour (which I do moſt humbly and earneſtly implore of his Majeſty, which again he is more ready to hear, and willing to grant, than I to ask Him) take ye all and ſeverally for his Sons and Daughters. And that henceforth ye may be as obedient Children, not faſhioning your ſelves again to the former Luſts of your Ignorance, not returning to your former Ungodlineſs and wonted ways; but as he that *hath called you is Holy, ſo ye are to be Holy in all manner of Converſation.* To turn over a new Leaf, and in every Thing, at all Times, and in all Places, to lead a godly Life. And though, *whilſt ye are at home in the Body, ye are abſent from the Lord*; yet as ye haſten towards the being abſent and diſlodged from the Body, to be preſent and appear before God, (*unto Thee ſhall all Fleſh come*, Pſal. 65. 2.) that the Lord may take and receive ye up into his *own Home*, in the higheſt Heavens; that after ye have ſerved Him, according to his Will, in this your Generation, he may make you to be Kings and Prieſts, to Reign with our GOD for ever and ever, *Amen* ſaith my Soul. But

But here it may be ſaid, as the ſame is felt and experienced, That after we have done all, and after we have ordered our Lives and Converſation as near as poſſibly can be, according to the Scripture Rule, and according to that Law Written in our Hearts, and according to that Grace manifeſted within us, ſo that we may make our Appeal unto GOD, and ſay, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do more?* I cannot, or do not as yet apprehend any thing more. Though we know nothing amiſs in our ſelves, yet we are not hereby juſtified. *Search me, O God, and know my Heart: try me, and know my Thoughts. And ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting*, Pſal. 139. 23, 24. Do thou diſcover and ſhew unto me any Sin or Errour in me, and I will reſolve to get out of it; ſo fain would I to be in the Way Everlaſting. Suppoſe our ſelves were in that Condition as the greateſt and beſt Saint on Earth now is. I gather from the Scriptures of Truth, that all thoſe People (and thoſe only) who *have a good Conſcience, and are willing to live honeſtly in all things*, Heb. 13. 18. will alſo go to Heaven; yet God only knows who that Man or Woman is by Name and Perſon in ſuch a Pariſh, Family, or Houſe, that ſhall certainly go to Heaven. But the Uſe and Obſervation I would make hereof, is, that whilſt the Heart of the Reader or Hearer burns within him, and as ye think throughly hereon, ye are apt to ſay ſeverally, *Lord, I hope it is I.* Well thou Man or Woman, who art to be a bleſſed Saint in Heaven, let me now ask thee this mean while, Whither after all

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thy *Instant serving God Day and Night, that thou mayest come unto that Place,* (see *Act.* 26. 7.) Is there not in thee nevertheless some Fear and Bondage through the Apprehension of this thing of *Death* coming on thee? I do in no wise say there are those greater Degrees and Measure thereof, as in the Wicked and Ungodly Multitude; for if it were so, what Advantage would there be of Religion? and this would contradict all our foregoing Discourse. But is there not some small Tincture thereof in thee, which is just to be perceived? Dost thou not find some little Tast and Relish of this bitter Cup? which, though the Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord doth lessen in great Measure, yet it doth not utterly take away. For my part I do profess, besides those dreadful outward Circumstances and Concomitants of Pain, languishing Corruption, Stink and Dissolution; I do yet ten times more dread, than all those visible things to be I know not what, I know not where. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be,* 1 John 3. 2. And though we are told of Heaven and Paradise in the general, yet what manner of Place that is, we know not, for we have not yet seen it: Though we do believe, and are abundantly told that it is very Good; yet we startle at the Entrance thereinto. This Particle, *Once to die,* Heb. 9. 27. makes it yet more dreadful; for to be rendred that which we were never before, to be carried thither where we never were as yet, there is some natural Fear in this, and then to be forced or hurried away, whither we will or will not; all this doth raise a Fear, though it be to make our Condition

Condition yet better. And this laſt is our State here, for *God carrieth away the Children of Men*, (whether they will or will not) *as a Flood, they are as a Sleep*, Pſal 90. 5. and this is done without asking our leave, whither we chuſe or refuſe. *The Cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink?* ſaid Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God. And ſo the Cup, *It is appointed for all Men once to die*, which our Creatour hath given us, ſhall not we Creatures drink? Yes we ſhall *Volens Nolens*, whither we will or refuſe, there being no removing the Neck from it, but we muſt all ſubmit and lie down under theſe Laws of Mortality. *And it ſhall be, if they refuſe to take the Cup at thine hand to drink, then ſhalt thou ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, Ye ſhall certainly drink*, Jer. 25. 28. *Behold, the Lord maketh the Earth empty, and maketh it waſt, and turneth it upſide down, and ſcattereth abroad the Inhabitants thereof, the Land ſhall be utterly emptied*, Iſa. 24. 13. juſt as we empty any Veſſel, ſo doth the Lord empty the whole Earth every Fourſcore or Hundred Years, and turns them out every one in his own Order, and cauſeth others to ſpring and grow up in their Room.

A through Conſideration of all this will raiſe in us a dread of the Lord God Almighty; and ſo alſo ſeeing that we now ſtand on the Earth, but we muſt be turned and emptied out as our Forefathers already are, we fear what will become of us then, and we do yet more dread it becauſe of this forced and violent Manner: As to this the Language of the Knowing and Obedient Soul is, *It is the Lord, let him do with me and and all the Gene-*

Generations of Mankind, as seemeth Good in his Sight. This is to be acknowledged and will be found true, that after the utmost and continued Thought and Searching of Heart which can be had or used concerning this matter; after we have done all, after we have ordered our Life and Conversation as near as ever we can according to the written Word of God, and according to that Goodness and Truth which he hath shewed and revealed in our inward Parts, yet we must leave and submit it all to God; we are Creatures meerly in his Hands: As He first brought us into Being without our foregoing Knowledge and Consent, and we are not to say unto Him, *Why hast thou Formed me thus?* or, *How came things to be so Ordered to our Hand as we see and find they are?* even so our Creator it seemed Good in thy Sight. In like manner it will be as to our future State and Condition, concerning which we believe, apprehend and conceive somewhat in the General By the Aid of Revelation and Reason, by God's written Word and the Spirit which he hath put within us; we can indeed come somewhat near to Assurance, yet still we see but as *through a Glass darkly*, and know but in part. It will be so with every one of us according as God pleaseth, according to his own Soveraignty attempered with his Goodness and Truth. By Death we fall into the Hands of the Living God, and then He may deal with us as He will: However He being a *God of Truth* will so do and render to every Man and Woman according as their Works have been, and according as he hath told us afore in his

his Word which is *Truth*: We shall be judged according to the Words written in that Book: And they only are Blessed and Safe who in the mean while frame and square their whole Life and Conversation according to all the Words and Things contained therein. Then we shall have this Testimony, *Beloved now are we the Sons of God*, (and if so, then when God shall punish others, he will spare us, as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him) *and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is*, 1 John 3. 2. This again is but a general and confused knowledge; for What or How is it to be like unto God, or to see him as he is; Lord, thou knowest, but we do not know clearly and throughly, no more then we know *what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child: even so we know not the Works of God who maketh all*, Eccles. 11. 5. we know not things present, much less things to come; but to know that we shall be like God and see Him as he is, this doth create Happiness and raise Boldness to the Reasonable Creature, because hereby is shewn forth that God is reconciled and will do Good unto us. The only way to be partakers of this Hope is by *Purity* and *Holiness* as appears from 1 John 3. 3. and other parallel Places of Scripture, as particularly that, *without Holiness no Man shall see the LORD*.

But this we certainly know that as it is Written, *It is but a very little while and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful Field*; so it is *but a very little while and we shall be caught up every one of us into endless Life*: For, as the Apostle Paul saith of the Resurrection and God's coming to Judgment, *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air*, 1 Thes. 4. 17. so it is of every Man or Womans particular Death or Dissolution, then these Souls which are now within these Bodies, are Immortal and will remain Alive after they are let out from these Bodies, and they return to God who gave them, where they ascend up into the uppermost Parts of the World, above the Clouds and the Air, and then they are caught up into endless

leſs Life, or rather into their Eternal State. It is but a *very little while* and we ſhall be removed into another kind of Being, and into another place of Abode, which will as much exceed this preſent Life, and this Earth which we Inhabit, both in reſpect of Duration and Excellency, much more than the moſt fruitful and wholſom Land doth exceed a Barren, Dry, and Waſt, Howling Wilderneſs. We are not better than our Fathers; and it is but a very little while and we ſhall be *brought down to the People of old time* according as God ſpeaketh by *Ezekiel*.

The beſt Uſe and Concluſion of the whole Matter is this, even to *paſs the time of our Sojourning here in Fear*, that we do not Sin againſt or Offend God in any Matter Great or Small, neither by Commiſſion of Sin, nor by Omiſſion of Duty for that is Sin alſo, *For to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not to him it is Sin*, Jam. 4. 17. And if we thus ſpend the time of our Sojourning in Fear, from this kind of Fear doth proceed a Good Conſcience, thence no Fear, that is no ſuch Fear which is Slaviſh or gendreth Bondage, or hath Torment: This is the only way to be delivered from the *Fear of Death*, in the midſt of and throughout our Life; as alſo to be ſaved from all the Danger and Evil of it, when it comes nigh, and ſhall be indeed upon us. *It is appointed for all once to dies* but God only knows whoſe turn it ſhall be to taſt firſt thereof and then he ſhall more clearly perceive the Truth of what hath been here Written. But there cannot be more deſired than to be delivered from that Bondage occaſioned through Fear of it, as alſo, to be ſaved and preſerved from the Evil and Danger thereof.

The only way hath been ſhewed and told unto Men *Stand in awe, and ſin not*, Pſal. 4. 4. Do all the Good that ever ye can. Conſider well hereof. Ponder theſe things in your Hearts. But above all, be ſure to do accordingly

FINIS.